Stigmatization as a Result of the Illegalization of some Forms of Transnational Movement: Dehumanization of “the Illegal Migrants”

The process of legalization and legitimization of discrimination of foreigners who are trying to reach some of the EU countries without appropriate permissions is the major topic of this text. It is shown how a legal and administrative qualification of a type of movement transforms into a social qualification of people who are undertaking that type of movement. To put it differently, the process of metaphoric transformations of the illegal movement to the illegal people is represented here. Once being done, these transformations allow further proliferation of ‘the illegal people’ to ‘criminals’ or ‘victims’, but they also can lead to the denial of all or some human characteristics to the people in question – dehumanization. When dehumanization is accepted at the level of representations, it begins to serve as the excuse for and justification of the aggressive practices towards the dehumanized people. This circular phenomenon of dehumanization is manifested systematically: it can be identified in the laws, the work of some state or international institutions, in everyday’s communication between the migrants and the people they meet.

In the beginning of this text the migrations through the territory of Serbia and its asylum system have been presented. This is followed by the discussion of the dehumanization and the legislature and the legislative practices that support it. In the concluding part of the text dehumanization is presented as a linguistic, metaphoric, pragmatic and discursive phenomenon.